

Hard-surfaced road

ound in western Iowa, the 140-mile route begins at Stuart in Guthrie County and spans the four counties of Guthrie, Audubon, Shelby and Harrison. From Stuart the byway goes north to connect with Iowa 44 in Panora. It then rolls along a ridge top through the towns of Guthrie Center and Hamlin, giving wide, far views on both sides of the roadway of terraced hillsides and farmsteads nestled into deep valleys.

The route then passes through the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton where travelers may view vast apple orchards and traditional Danish windmills. Follow the signs as they take you past Jacksonville and into Harlan, where the route forms a loop. On the northern portion of the loop, you will travel through Westphalia, Panama and Woodbine. The southern portion of the loop travels through the community of Portsmouth, and after rejoining the main route, continues to the city of Missouri Valley.

At the western end of the byway, the Loess Hills are introduced in a subtle but enticing way. This unique landform, located on the eastern edge of the Missouri River valley, was formed by wind and river-sculpted glacial silt deposits.

The east side of Harlan's town square

For more information about the Western Skies Scenic Byway, contact the Danish Windmill Museum and Welcome Center, 4038 Main Street, Elk Horn, 51531, 800-451-7960; or the Harrison County Historical Village and Welcome Center, located three and one-half miles north of Missouri Valley on U.S. 30, 712-642-2114; or the Loess Hills Scenic Byway and Visitors Center at 109 Oak Street in Moorhead, 51558, 712-886-5441.

